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FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3023  
INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE  
RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBP/AMEMBASSY BAMAKO 0444  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1130  
RUEHNM/AMEMBASSY NIAMEY 2406  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1511  
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 0867  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0593  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0605

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 NDJAMENA 000141

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DS/IP/AF, H, INR, INR/GGI, PRM, USAID/OTI AND USAID/W FOR  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/28/2016  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [ASEC](#) [CD](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: CHAD: REBEL SCORECARD

REF: A. 04 NDJAMENA 1020

- [1](#)B. 04 NDJAMENA 658
- [1](#)C. NDJAMENA 57
- [1](#)D. NDJAMENA 95

Classified By: Political/Economic Officer Kathleen FitzGibbon for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Chad is bracing for more rebel attacks along the border. Chadian authorities firmly believe that the Government of Sudan is supporting Mahamat Nour, and possibly others, in their efforts to overthrow the regime of President Idriss Deby Itno. This perception, coupled with Chad's interests in Darfur, has prompted Deby to forge stronger alliances with Zaghawa Darfurian rebels, purchase weapons to fortify his border, and confront the World Bank over the use of Chad's oil revenues. Chadian officials, like the Darfur rebels, also believe that Sudan is waging a proxy war through Nour and other Chadian rebels in order to justify the deployment of Sudanese troops into Darfur. In Chad's view, the Sudanese are seeking to destroy the Darfur movements on the ground or at the very least, cut off their access to Chad. Finally, the Chadian Government also speculates that Sudan is intent on relocating Jandjaweed into Chad in the event of a peace deal which requires their disarmament. From this side of the border, it is difficult for us to judge the Sudanese Government's intentions. Nonetheless, in assessing the complexities of the evolving situation, Chadian and Darfurian rebel perceptions of GOS intentions may have a greater impact on the calculations and actions of key actors than do realities. END SUMMARY

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BACKGROUND  
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[1](#)2. (C) The Chadian Government has publicly accused the Government of Sudan of supporting Chadian rebels since June 2004 (Refs A and B). At that time, then-presidential advisor for international relations Ahmad Allam-mi said that there were Chadian rebels in Sudan. In April 2005, the Chadian Government stated that there were some 3,000 Chadian rebels concentrated in Sudan near Makjar, near El Geneina. Specifically, Chad accused the GOS's "special services" of continuing to "maintain, arm, and finance Chadian opponents

that have established themselves in Sudanese territory<sup>8</sup>. Allam-mi said that he confronted Sudanese Intelligence chief Salah Gosh directly about his support for the rebels. Gosh denied the allegations. Chad also lodged a protest with Sudan for a jandjaweed incursion at Modeina on September 26, 2005 that killed at least 36 people. Meanwhile, throughout the year, humanitarian organizations and traditional leaders in the East report numerous cross-border incursions by thieves, jandjaweed, and suspected Chadian rebels, particularly in the area south of Abeche.

13. (C) The Chadian Government tried to resolve the issue through diplomatic means, but became increasingly convinced that the GOS would not rein in the Chadian rebels. Last October Deby intensified his efforts to repair poor relations with the Darfur rebel movements, leaders. Prior to this, Deby was criticized for not consistently assisting his Zaghawa brothers from Sudan and, in the case of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), for trying to destroy the movement. Meanwhile, his half-brothers, Daoussa and Timan, were pursuing their own efforts with various factions of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) and JEM, as was his security service with the National Movement for Reform and Development (NMRD). The visits of SLM leaders Abdelwahid Nour (October, November), Minni Minawi (December, January), and Justice and Equality Movement,s representatives in October, and then JEM's Dr. Khalil Ibrahim himself in January represent a significant change of strategy for Chad.

14. (C) Deby's need for money increased as his domestic position also became increasingly vulnerable in 2005, the result of his quest to remain in power, increasing corruption, and growing isolation from his support base. Deby has not been able to repair the divisions within the

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family that brought about the May 2004 coup attempt. Over the past year, many family members and colleagues who helped put Deby in power have left his side for reasons that range from his desire to stay in power, corruption and mismanagement, and increasing heavy-handedness. The military desertions in October were a severe blow because close relatives were involved and the debate over whether to attack or negotiate with them blew family rifts wide open. Several generals and close family members have tried to reason with Deby to convince him to allow a power transition, especially after the military desertions from within his own clan in October. These &last ditch<sup>8</sup> efforts were made by well-regarded cousins, such as the Erdimi brothers, Abakar Tolli, the Chadian Ambassador to Sudan Sagour Youssef Itno, and Gen. Sebi Aguid. The Erdimi's, Tolli and Aguid have all left Chad.

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PREPARING FOR WAR  
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15. (C) Deby is forging alliances, seeking funds, and purchasing weapons to defend his regime. His government pushed the recently announced &alliance<sup>8</sup> between SLM,s Minni Minawi and Dr. Khalil Ibrahim and their largely Zaghawa forces. The Darfur rebel movements can help Deby by keeping the so-called &liberated areas<sup>8</sup> free from Chadian rebels. Minni himself told Ambassador Wall that SLM does not have much to offer Deby. Second, Deby began the process of changing the oil revenue management law to increase the percentage of oil funds flowing directly into government coffers and to count security among the priority sectors eligible for projects financed by oil revenues. The change in the law was promulgated in early January and has sparked a row with the World Bank, which has frozen Chad,s escrow account. Chadian officials also have reportedly traveled to Taiwan in search of financial support, allegedly for the upcoming elections. Finally, since the military desertions in October, we receive regular reports about arms purchases and deliveries, including plans to replace the helicopters

lost at the attack at Adre. Sources of the purchases include Kazakhstan, other former Eastern Bloc countries, and the United Arab Emirates. The French admit that they are reinforcing Abeche and provided logistics support to the Chadian military during the Adre attack.

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PERCEPTIONS OF THE ENEMY  
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16. (C) Mahamat Nour. Chadian Government officials view the Government of Sudan as the enemy and Nour and others as mere proxies. Widely believed to have the backing of the Sudanese intelligence services, Nour has been on the scene for years. An ethnic Tama, he may be the spearhead for Sudanese Government efforts, but some members of the Sudanese delegation in Abuja tell us that the GOS intends to place an ethnic Arab in power in Chad, not a Tama. Nonetheless, previous reporting indicates that Nour and other Chadian rebel leaders have forged ties with the jandjaweed, many of whom are Chadian Arabs. Nour's group (Rassemblement pour la Democratie et les Libertes - French acronym RDL) is based near El-Geneina.

7 (C) On December 29 RDL joined with eight other groups to form the United Front for Democratic Change (Front Uni pour le Changement Democratique - French acronym FUC). The FUC reportedly includes the SCUD of Deby relative Yaya Dillo, the CNT of Hassan Salleh Al Gadam, FIDL of Abbelwahit About, the FNRT of Babikir Ismails, the 8 December Group of Abakar Tollimi, the CNR group of Hissein Koty Yacoub and the FRRRT of Yaya Batit Ali al Mahoumoudi. These groups may in the short-term attempt to take advantage of insecurity caused by Nour, but it is not clear that they share the same view of post-conflict Chad and may not want to submit their aspirations to Nour, a Tama. Nour's political platform speaks specifically of having elections after a political transition period; the joint FUC communique only refers to one common aim: removing Idriss Deby from power.

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18. (C) Military deserters. According to several Deby family members and two former Ministers, Deby felt he could pay off military deserters and bring them back into the fold even after he gave orders to have the military attack them. However, the presence of Mahamat Nour and other Chadian rebel groups inside Sudan provided them with potential allies. Two Zaghawa ministers said that Deby believes that if an all-out clash began, the Zaghawa-led SCUD would ultimately defend Deby. These ministers said that Deby's belief in Zaghawa solidarity is misplaced because the deserters know that Deby gave orders to kill them. They claim that, since the desertions and defections of family members from Chad, Deby has had family members and associates rounded up and killed. Bodies are being found in groups far outside N'Djamena, according to human rights groups. These groups also believe that Deby revenge against other Zaghawa has violated the cardinal tribal rule against shedding blood of other clan members. Defections to the Sudanese side of the border continue, including prominent retired General Sebi Aguid and some of those around Mahamat Saleh Kaya. Deby's uncle, former Nomadic Guard Commander Mahamat Saleh Ibrahim, has allegedly encouraged Nomadic Guard members to join with renegade commander Ali Rozi.

19. (C) China. The discovery of Chinese-made weapons at the battle of Adre is whipping up suspicions that China, with Sudan's blessing, is backing Nour. China's interest reportedly is to gain favor with a new government in Chad or to scare Deby into turning his back on Taiwan. According to several business sources and JEM's President Khalil Ibrahim, Chad may be rethinking its Taiwan recognition, depending on what it can get from Taipei in terms of electoral assistance for the upcoming elections or funds to purchase arms. Some speculate that Deby may consider nationalizing the Doba Oil

Project and selling it to China or Taiwan, whichever offers the highest bid.

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GOOD FRIENDS ARE HARD TO FIND  
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¶10. (C) France. French Ambassador Jean-Pierre Bercot has often shared with us France's concerns that the Government of Sudan intends to install an Islamic regime in N,Djamena as part of a larger effort to put similar governments in power across the Sahel. It is in the interest of both France and the United States to prevent this, according to Bercot. Recently, Bercot told Ambassador Wall and DCM that France will not permit rebel forces to occupy Chadian territory (Ref C). This would significantly tilt the balance of forces against the Sudan-backed Chadian rebels. Previously, the French here have spoken of limiting their support for the Chadian military to logistics and surveillance.

¶11. (C) Darfur Rebels. Deby and the Darfurian rebel leaders share the same perception of the Sudanese Government's support for Nour and criticize the African Union for allowing the military build-up in West Darfur. All three key SLM and JEM leaders have met with Deby and described their similar preoccupations. The resulting common ground allowed Deby to patch up relations with key Darfurian rebel leaders Minni Minawi, Khalil Ibrahim, and to some extent Abdelwahid Nour. Abdelwahid has promised Deby help in October, but has not seen Deby since November. He is angered by Minni,s signing of the alliance with Khalil, but has told us that he believes the Government of Sudan intends to overthrow Deby and destroy the Darfur rebel movements. For his part, Minni,s reported weakened position on the ground made the alliance with Khalil and better relations with Chad attractive. Besides ethnic solidarity, Minni and to a minimal extent, Khalil, control the area of Darfur north of Tine to the Libyan border. This allows the Chadian military to concentrate its forces and attention to Abeche and parts south. Khalil, in our view, can offer Deby financial connections to Dubai and other Middle Eastern sources of weapons.

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WHAT'S NEXT?

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¶12. (C) Chadian military and public officials are gearing up for additional attacks on Chad. Chadian military forces have reinforced the Adre-Abeche and Goz Beida area. As a result, many observers here speculate that the Chadian rebels will not attempt another large-scale attack at Adre. Instead, Nour and the Chadian deserters may instead opt for smaller, more frequent assaults on lightly defended targets, such as Guereda and Iriba or small towns along the border south of Abeche. Other observers see a three-pronged attack coming, in which attacks on Kulbus-Guereda-Iriba-Tine, Adre-Abeche, and Tisi-Goz Beida are launched simultaneously.

¶13. (C) Our contacts within the political opposition in N,Djamena believe that there will be a more coordinated set of attacks in the near future. Members of the Coalition of Parties for the Defense of the Constitution (CDPC) have regular contact with the Sudanese rebels, SCUD, the Erdimi's, former Minister of Defense Djibine Dassert and his group of deserters in central Chad, the Movement for Democracy and Justice in the Tibesti (MDJT), and opposition members in exile in France and Benin Republic. According to several CDPC members, Abakar Tolli, reportedly a frequent caller from Sudan, said on January 24 that every day that passes allows Deby to acquire more weaponry. As a result, time is on Deby,s side, not the side of the rebellion. For this reason, most of the political opposition believes that an attack is imminent. A key question is whether or not a rushed operation will be more successful than the Adre attack

on December 18.

¶14. (C) The political opposition is more and more open about its attempts to coordinate with the armed movements. The CDPC is concerned that a Mahamat Nour-led rebellion will not bring about the type of political transition necessary to support stability to Chad. Their transition plan is a national dialogue or round table that would bring together the political opposition, the armed opposition, the ruling party, religious leaders, the military, and technocrats under the leadership of someone who would help manage an internationally-backed political transition. Over the past two weeks, various CDPC members have met with the Ambassador, DCM, and P/E officer to give their assessments of upcoming events. They foresee several offensives on the rebel fronts, in the east by Nour, SCUD, and others and in the north by the MDJT in Faya Largeau and Bardai. They claim that once these attacks happen, Dasseret's forces will begin moving toward N,Djamena from the south. Within N,Djamena, the labor unions will be joined by the opposition in the streets. They also claim that there will be additional military desertions from military garrisons in N,Djamena. The CDPC also believes that these actions will cause the regime to collapse or at a minimum enter into negotiations for a transition.

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IMPLICATIONS  
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¶15. (C) The deterioration of the Chad-Sudan border situation could seriously destabilize the region. Instability resulting in an irregular regime change in Chad undermines efforts to promote a peaceful political transition (Ref D). Worse, we could be confronted with a strongman and potentially Islamic Government installed with support from Khartoum. Attacks along the Adre-Abeche-Goz Beida or the Guereda-Iriba-Tine axis and potential ethnic violence could lead to the displacement of Sudanese refugees who sought protection in Chad and creation of large numbers of internally-displaced Chadians. The potential involvement of jandjaveed in collaboration with Chadian rebels and/or displacement of jandjaveed into Chad could start another Darfur-like situation on this side of the border. Reverberations would be felt in Sudan, Central African Republic, Cameroon, and possibly northern Nigeria.

¶16. (C) Further instability on the border will also hurt peace talks on Darfur in Abuja. Darfur rebels groups interpret the Sudanese-backed Chadian rebellion as targeting

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them. They also allege African Union complicity by allowing the build up of Sudanese force in contravention of the cease-fire. Both JEM and SLM have told us that if Sudan should launch operations against Chad, they will walk away from the peace talks, in which their confidence is already waning. Finally, if Chadian suspicions about Sudanese intentions of seeking a military solution in Darfur are correct, the ability to reach an agreement in Abuja may be inextricably tied to success or failure of Chadian rebel border operations.

¶17. (U) Tripoli Minimize Considered.  
WALL